Members know, this is an issue that the Parliamentary Standing Committee has been sitting over, if I am not mistaken, for the last three long years. And, until the Parliamentary Standing Committee unlocks that door, it is not possible for me to put my foot anywhere.

SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity. Through you, I would like to ask the hon. Minister this. The Narsimham Committee, after studying the entire structure of banking, recommended that we should have three or four banks of global size. Sir, the recommendation means that we should have a bank of the size that will be reckoned by the world of global size. Now, the State Bank of India ranks as one of the first 100 banks. As we do not have a bank of global size, our economy is not respected in the world. Therefore, Sir, this recommendation of the Narsimham Committee of having three or four banks in India of a global size requires that the associate banks should be merged with the State Bank of India. There would be benefit of synergy because some of the associate banks, like State Bank of Hyderabad, are functioning much better than State Bank of India itself. This recommendation has been under consideration for too long. Would the hon. Finance Minister tell us the time limit by which we would come to some conclusion?

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Sir, we are aware of the recommendations. We have initiated a Committee called the Narsimham Committee. I have just voiced my personal opinion in this regard. The difficulty, as the hon. Member knows, is that there is currently a lock on any further initiative in this direction unless the Standing Committee of Parliament unlocks. The key is not with me; the key is with the Standing Committee. If you are a Member of the Standing Committee, why don't you carry this throught to the Standing Committee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Allocation of Kerosene to Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh

*381. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether kerosene being allotted to Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh is in proportion to the national average;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the quota of kerosene is proposed to be increased in view of the increasing population and the dependence of the rural people on kerosene;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (e) Kerosene allocation to various States/Union Territories including Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, under Public Distribution System is made as per the policy adopted by Government. The allocation policy involves several factors including past allocations and domestic LPG connections released in the respective states every year.

Under-Invoicing by Exporters/Importers

*386. SHRI ABANI ROY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Customs authorities have imposed penalty on several, exporters/importers and individuals for underinvoicing exports/imports under COFEPOSA during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to strengthen various laws to check such frauds; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE FINANCE MINISTER (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (d) Seven persons were detained under COFEPOSA during last three years. There is no penalty imposable under this Act. Through the Finance Act, 2003, Government have already strengthened various provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, particularly section 113, 114, 135 and 136.